United Nations S/PV.4717

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4717th meeting

Tuesday, 11 March 2003, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Traoré	(Guinea)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Ndoumbe Eboule
	Chile	Mr. Streeter
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Spain	Ms. Menendez
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Letter dated 7 March 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/283).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

03-27472 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Letter dated 7 March 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/283)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Georgia, Greece, Iceland, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Japan, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, South Africa, the Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Nesho (Albania), Mr. Baali (Algeria), Mr. Listre (Argentina), Mr. Dauth (Australia), Mr. Ivanou (Belarus), Mr. Murillo de la Rocha (Bolivia), Mr. Moura (Brazil), Mr. Heinbecker (Canada), Mr. Giraldo (Colombia), Mr. Rodriguez Parrilla (Cuba), Mr. Padilla Tonos (Dominican Republic), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Lagos Pizzati (El Salvador), Mr. Lordkipanidze (Georgia), Mr. Vassilakis (Greece), Mr. Ingolfsson (Iceland), Mr. Nambiar (India), Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia), Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Haraguchi (Japan), Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic), Mr. Jegermanis (Latvia), Mr. Diab (Lebanon), Mr. Own (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Zainuddin (Malaysia), Mr. Mackay (New Zealand), Mr. Sevilla Somoza (Nicaragua), Mrs. Yahaya (Nigeria), Mr. Kolby (Norway), Mr. Manalo (Philippines), Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea), Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore), Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Mr. Erwa (Sudan), Mr. Staehelin (Switzerland), Mr. Kasemsarn (Thailand), Mr. Cengizer (Turkey), Mr. Ngo Duc Thang (Viet Nam) and Mr. Chidyausiku (Zimbabwe) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, which reads as follows:

> "In accordance with article 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, I have the honour to request the participation of His Excellency Mr. Yahya Mahmassani, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, in the discussion of the agenda item entitled 'The situation between Iraq and Kuwait', which will start on 11 March 2003."

That letter will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2003/292.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Yahya Mahmassani.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, Mr. Yahya Mahmassani, to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 11 March 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Sudan to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

> "In my capacity as Chairman of the Islamic Group, I have the honour to request that Ambassador Mokhtar Lamani, Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic

Conference to the United Nations, be allowed to participate in the debate in the Security Council on the agenda item entitled 'The situation between Iraq and Kuwait', in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council."

This letter will be issued as a document of the Security Council (S/2003/298).

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Mokhtar Lamani.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Lamani to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in response to the request contained in a letter dated 7 March 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (document S/2003/283).

I welcome the presence in our midst of the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette.

Before opening the floor, I wish to request all participants to limit their statement to no more than seven minutes in order to enable the Council to work efficiently within its timetable. I thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to extend its gratitude to you, Sir, for the convening of this open meeting. We would also like to extend our thanks to the delegation of Malaysia, Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, for requesting this meeting, given the need to hear the opinion of the international community, in a spirit of transparency and collective responsibility, on a serious problem and on the threat of aggression against a member State of the Movement.

My statement will concentrate on replying to some of the questions that are being pondered by the representatives of many States, particularly after the confusion of facts and falsehoods and untrue allegations propagated by the United States and the United Kingdom with respect to Iraq's compliance and implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

First, has Iraq complied, and is Iraq complying with the relevant Security Council resolutions on disarmament? Iraq cooperated with the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) during a period of eight years. Hence, 95 per cent of the disarmament tasks were fulfilled, between 1991 and 1994. That was confirmed by Mr. Ekeus. Cooperation continued until 1998, which led former inspector Mr. Scott Ritter, a United States citizen and the senior inspector at the time, to admit that Iraq no longer possessed weapons of mass destruction. Today, following the return of the inspectors — who were withdrawn from Iraq in 1998 by Mr. Butler, upon the orders of the United States of America — Mr. Blix, in his briefing of 7 March 2003, stated that Iraq is proactively cooperating, and he referred in detail to the scope and nature of that cooperation.

Secondly, do the inspectors encounter any problems in reaching the sites to be inspected? Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei answered that Iraq opened all doors and sites to inspectors, that there were no obstacles, that the inspections currently under way are serious, effective and immediate and that inspectors can reach any site they wish to inspect with ease and without any notable problems.

Thirdly, have the inspectors found weapons of mass destruction? The replies of Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei confirmed that inspection activities have not found any weapons of mass destruction or programmes to produce such weapons. They confirmed that Iraq declared recently its missile programme unilaterally and that Iraq, under the supervision of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), is destroying Al Samoud 2 missiles, which UNMOVIC deemed to be proscribed.

Fourthly, were the United States and the United Kingdom able to demonstrate the existence of proscribed weapons or programmes through the intelligence data and documents presented by them? A negative response to that question was given by Mr. Blix and ElBaradei. In fact, one of the documents presented, alleging an attempt by Iraq to import uranium from an African country, proved to be a

forgery. Furthermore, the latest intelligence report submitted by Britain was originally a thesis by a student of Iraqi origin written in 1990. That intelligence report essentially contained previously published information plagiarized by British intelligence services and was replete with errors of language and syntax, according to the student's statement.

The allegations presented by Mr. Powell on 5 February 2003 were refuted by the facts in the possession of the inspectors, following four months of reinforced inspections in Iraq. Therefore, none of the allegations — none of the so-called facts put forward by Mr. Powell — have proved to be true.

Fifthly, are there any shortcomings in the work of inspectors and their scientific and technical capacity to discover any proscribed weapons or programmes? The inspectors have at their disposal the latest advanced equipment, including laboratory testing equipment of soil, water and air, remote sensors that detect materials in deep ground, vibration detectors and aerial surveillance aircraft. Iraq has not interfered in the work of inspectors from any technical aspect whatever.

Sixthly, was not resolution 1441 (2002) an initiative of the United States and United Kingdom to reinforce the inspection regime and an attempt to rule out implementing resolution 1284 (1999)? Iraq's acceptance of resolution 1441 (2002) and its precise implementation of all provisions contained in it had prevented the United States and the United Kingdom from using it as a pretext to declare war on Iraq. Having lost such an opportunity, they started to raise doubts concerning the inspections and the inspectors and their capabilities. They then sought other new pretexts such as terrorism, regime change, Iraq's threat to its neighbours, American interests and the need to disarm Iraq of its so-called weapons of mass destruction by force. This means waging war, which is the main objection of this game.

Seventh, does the document submitted by UNMOVIC to the Security Council at its last meeting (S/2003/232), which takes up unresolved disarmament issues, mean that weapons of mass destruction do exist in Iraq? Mr. Blix replied to this question by saying the document on remaining disarmament issues does not provide any evidence that Iraq has proscribed weapons or programmes. Rather, the document contains a list of questions, the answers to which will enable UNMOVIC to verify the prior destruction of these weapons in 1991 in order to reach a so-called material balance. UNMOVIC, as well as its predecessor, the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), have spoken repeatedly on this matter.

Bear in mind that Iraq did request UNMOVIC for some time, even before the adoption of resolution 1441 (2002), to present such a document. It would be important for Iraq to view the main tasks required of it in order to implement them as soon as possible and to study such questions and answer them.

Eighth, the so-called new evidence put forward by the United States and the United Kingdom during the past two days that alleges that Iraq is in material breach of Security Council resolutions no doubt reflects, I believe, the quandary faced by the United States administration in proving its previous allegations. These allegations have become a subject of ridicule. The issue is no more than that of a small experimental primitive pilotless aircraft without any prototype for production whatever. Inspection teams have viewed the aircraft, its specifications, and their details. They ascertained those technical specifications, especially regarding fuel tank and engine capacity; they were tested within the range of the airport. This is a radio-controlled aircraft, which is controlled by and remains within the sight range of its ground controller. It does not go beyond eight kilometres. Therefore, it is not a weapon of mass destruction or a delivery method that surpasses the range set forward in Security Council resolutions.

Is this truly a material breach of Security Council resolutions, and particularly resolution 1441 (2002)? We leave it to you to ascertain the truth of such allegations. They show the bankruptcy of the attempts of the United States administration to convince the international community that such allegations are true. The issue, ultimately, is in the hands of UNMOVIC. It is up to UNMOVIC to reach its conclusions.

I would like to conclude my statement by making two points. The first is that Iraq is aware that since it first began dealing with this matter, the United States and the United Kingdom will put in doubt any result reached, because their goal is not disarmament, which has in effect been achieved. They very well know this, as will soon be established by UNMOVIC and the International Atomic Energy Agency. Rather, their objective is to lay their hands on our oil, control the

region and redraw its borders in order to ensure the continuation of vital interests for the United States for a long period to come. This is a new direct colonization of the region.

My second and last point is that Iraq has taken the strategic decision to rid itself of weapons of mass destruction. Had this decision not been the right one, it would not have cooperated with UNMOVIC. Today, Iraq, before the Council, reiterates its readiness to cooperate in a fruitful and constructive manner so that it will be determined that weapons of mass destruction no longer exist in Iraq and that sanctions imposed on it would be lifted. We will convincingly answer the questions of anyone who has any doubts about Iraq's cooperation. We shall answer the false allegations that are used to justify war against us. Iraq reaffirms that peaceful means, dialogue and cooperation are the quickest and best means to resolve the current crisis.

My delegation, through the Council, calls upon the international community to prevent a catastrophe that has now become imminent. We call upon the Security Council and the Secretary-General to shoulder their responsibilities, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter, to thwart any aggression against Iraq.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Kuwait. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to say what a pleasure it is to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month. I wish you every success in guiding the work of the Council during this critical period.

I would also like to thank your predecessor, Mr. Gunter Pleuger, Permanent Representative of Germany, for his commendable efforts as President of the Council last month.

The Council is meeting today to continue its consideration of developments in the crisis between Iraq and the United Nations. This is the third occasion on which such an open meeting has been convened at short notice in response to a request by the chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement. The Council's responsiveness demonstrates its concern for transparency in its working methods and its interest in enabling all members to participate in debates on decision-making matters relating to international peace and security.

Today's debate is being held at a particularly severe and sensitive time for the Gulf region as a result of the intransigent policies of the Iraqi Government, which has not fulfilled its obligations under relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 687 (1991), 1284 (1999) and 1441 (2002), thereby creating the acute tension that now prevails within the international community. The Iraqi Government alone bears full responsibility for the suffering of the brotherly Iraqi people over the difficult past 12 years. The Iraqi people could have enjoyed more pleasant times and directed all their efforts to building peace and prosperity had it not been for those events.

Kuwait has already expressed, at the international and regional levels, its clear position with regard to the current crisis between Iraq and the United Nations. Today's meeting provides a further opportunity for us to reaffirm our position, which I would like to sum up in a number of points.

First, Kuwait fully supports the efforts being made to find a peaceful resolution of the issue of disarming Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction, in keeping with international law. We would like to point out that the resolutions and final declarations adopted at summit meetings of the Non-Aligned Movement, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference not only express a preference for a peaceful settlement of the problem, through the international community, but have outlined the path that is to be followed by asking Iraq to implement all the relevant Security Council resolutions and to cooperate fully, immediately and unconditionally with the inspectors, in implementation of resolution 1441 (2002).

Secondly, the draft resolution that the Council is considering would furnish the Iraqi Government with additional time during which it could reveal its weapons of mass destruction and hand them over to the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission. Kuwait hopes that the Iraqi Government will avail itself of that opportunity and accept the international community's appeals, thereby protecting the Iraqi people and the region from suffering the consequences of war.

Thirdly, the draft resolution reflects the Council's determination with respect to Iraq's current challenge

to the international community, and therefore deserves full support.

Fourthly, although we hope that it will not be necessary to use military force, we reaffirm our belief that it is for the Iraqi Government to protect the Iraqi people and the people of the region as a whole from the dangers and other negative repercussions resulting from military action by altering its behaviour and changing the direction in which it is moving as quickly as possible and by actively and substantively cooperating, instead of pretending to do so — merely acting in a procedural and nominal manner.

Fifthly, unity within the Security Council must be preserved. Such unity is an indispensable factor for securing the implementation of the provisions of Council resolutions, in particular if they are supported by effective force. Council unity, backed by concrete will, is the message that must be sent, very clearly, to the Iraqi leadership. Past experience in the Council with respect to Iraq shows that only common will, resolve and a united front on the part of members will be able effectively to bring about the desired results.

The obligations imposed on the Iraqi Government by the Security Council are not confined to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Although that is an important and crucial aspect of securing international peace and security, it is not the only obligation imposed on Iraq. There are also important matters that have remained unresolved since the liberation of Kuwait from the invasion in 1990. It is unfortunate that the approach taken by the Iraqi Government since 1991 with regard to the inspectors and the task of eliminating its weapons of mass destruction — an approach with which we are all familiar — is the same as that taken by Iraq when dealing with humanitarian matters, such as the issue of the Kuwaiti prisoners of war and detainees, and with regard to returning Kuwaiti property. This shows how evasiveness, procrastination and deceit are a fixed part of Iraq's way of dealing with international resolutions. Iraq has, since, last January, been participating in the Technical Committee, which forms part of the Tripartite Committee presided over by the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Technical Committee has met four times to date in Amman, Jordan. However, no concrete results have yet been forthcoming. During those meetings Iraq showed no sincere willingness to follow through on those issues. Again, Iraq dissembled, used delaying tactics and failed to live up to its promises. Superficial and procedural forms of cooperation have been employed by the Iraqi Government for many years when dealing with those humanitarian matters. That flies in the face of the obligations set out in Security Council resolutions 686 (1991), 687 (1991) and 1284 (1999).

The same behaviour is evident with regard to restoring Kuwaiti property, documents and archives. Some documents were recently given back, but upon examination it became clear that they were ordinary forms of correspondence, not the official archives of the Kuwaiti State, which were stolen by the Iraqi Government.

Finally, Kuwait hopes that the Council will be able to overcome its differences of opinion and its internal divisions that threaten it authority and jeopardize its basic responsibility to maintain international peace and security. We also hope that the Council will be able to reach an agreement that truly reflects the common will of the international community and its firm resolve to confront any political manoeuvring by the Iraqi leadership. The Iraqi leadership commonly employs that sort of manoeuvring whenever political military pressure is intensified. As we have seen in the past, Iraq is the sole winner whenever there is division. In fact, differences of opinion are a goal sought by the Iraqi leadership. They do everything in their power to bring about such differences, as that is how they can shirk their obligations, weaken the Council's resolve and prevent it from following up and implementing its resolutions.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Kuwait for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Malaysia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Zainuddin (Malaysia): First of all, allow me, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Germany, for his excellent stewardship of the Council last month.

We would also like to express our appreciation to the members of the Security Council for having convened this open debate. Most of all, we wish to

commend the Security Council for its commitment to multilateral diplomacy and for continuing the role of the Council as the ideal forum to explore all options in addressing the situation between Iraq and Kuwait.

We, the 116 member States of the Non-Aligned Movement, which represent two-thirds of humanity, have called for this open debate at this crucial and challenging moment so that the views of the larger membership of the United Nations on this important issue can be heard in the Security Council.

At the outset, we are also pleased to inform the Council that the XIII Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, which was held from 24 to 25 February 2003 at Kuala Lumpur, was a major success. The Conference served as an extremely useful venue to exchange views covering many subjects of importance to the Movement, which embodies the hopes and aspirations for economic prosperity in a world that is peaceful, secure and just.

It was also clear that the well-being of the world would be better served by a strong multilateral system revolving around a United Nations that is more representative and democratic, rather than by a unilateral system based on the dominance of one Power, however benign that Power may be. We need to strengthen and promote the multilateral process in the preservation and promotion of world peace through dialogue and diplomacy and by avoiding resorting to war to resolve conflicts. Apart from the adoption of the Kuala Lumpur declaration, which reaffirmed the Movement's commitment to the pursuit of a peaceful and prosperous world order based on the principles of the Bandung Conference and the Charter of the United Nations, the summit at Kuala Lumpur also adopted two statements, namely, concerning Iraq and Palestine.

As the Council is aware, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, wrote on 3 March 2003 to all the heads of State and Government sitting on the Security Council to convey the position and concerns of the Non-Aligned Movement on the matter of Iraq. I wish to reiterate that position and those concerns at today's open debate.

The Non-Aligned Movement is gravely concerned over the precarious and rapidly deteriorating situation arising from the looming threat of war. We believe that war against Iraq will be a destabilizing factor for the region and for the whole world, as it will have far-reaching political, economic and humanitarian consequences for all. We, the Non-Aligned Movement, are committed to the fundamental principles of the non-use of force and of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and security of all Member States of the United Nations.

We welcome and support all efforts exerted to avert war against Iraq, and call for the persistent continuation of such efforts based on multilateral diplomacy, as opposed to unilateral actions. We also reaffirm the central role of the United Nations and the Security Council in maintaining international peace and security. It would be abusive to obtain the legitimacy of unilateral purpose under the pretext of a multilateral cause. It will be a sad day for the world when the credibility and integrity of the Security Council and of the United Nations are challenged, and more so if they are threatened in any way.

We welcome the decision by Iraq to actively cooperate with United Nations inspectors in accordance with Security Council resolution 1441 (2002), which will assure the world of a peaceful manner of disarming Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, we call on Iraq to continue to actively comply with resolution 1441 (2002) and all other relevant Security Council resolutions, as well as to remain engaged in the process. We believe that would be an important step towards opening up the way to a comprehensive and peaceful resolution of all pending issues between Iraq and the United Nations that takes into account the concerns of all affected parties, including Iraq's neighbours.

We wish to emphasize that the current disarmament efforts in Iraq should not be an end in themselves, but that they should also constitute a step towards the lifting of sanctions in accordance with Security Council resolution 687 (1991).

We believe that the peaceful resolution of the Iraqi crisis will ensure that the Security Council is also in a position to ensure Iraq's sovereignty and the inviolability of its territorial integrity, political independence and security, in compliance with paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), on the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction that includes Israel.

We would like to extend our utmost appreciation to the tireless efforts exerted by the weapons

inspectors, headed by Mr. Hans Blix and Mr. Mohammad ElBaradei. Based on the recent reports they presented to the Council just last week, on 7 March 2003, it is gratifying to note that there has been substantial progress in the work of the weapons inspectors. Mr. Blix personally acknowledged that when he said that the destruction of the Al Samoud 2 missiles was regarded as a "substantial measure of disarmament". He also categorically stated that there was no evidence to support the claim that Iraq was hiding biological and chemical weapons in mobile laboratories and underground shelters. In his report Mr. ElBaradei also alluded that the allegation that Iraq had tried to purchase uranium from Niger were based on documents that were inauthentic. The submission of false reports to the United Nations regarding Iraq's alleged nuclear weapons programme is a worrisome and an irresponsible act. It is important that information provided by all Member States to assist weapons inspectors in carrying out their tasks successfully in accordance with resolution 1441 (2002) be credible.

We believe that the problem of Iraq can be resolved peacefully through the United Nations. That view is held by the majority of the members of the Security Council, permanent and non-permanent members alike, a fact that best reflects the views of the global community. The Council must strive to find a peaceful solution to the current crisis. We believe that this is possible without resorting to war. The Council should remain aware of the untold misery that war will inflict on the countries and the people in the region. The Middle East, already a flashpoint of conflict — primarily because of Israeli aggression and occupation of Palestinian and Arab lands — cannot afford any more turmoil. History has taught us that it is easy to start a war, but ending it is often an arduous and complex task that, in many recent cases, has been inconclusive.

It is our earnest hope that the Council will give serious consideration to the views of the Non-Aligned Movement. In the name of humanity, we appeal to the members of the Council not to resort to military action against Iraq. There is no dishonour in responding to the appeals of the international community to prevent the use of force against Iraq.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Malaysia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of South Africa. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): My delegation would like to congratulate Guinea on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. Your stewardship, Mr. President, comes at a most difficult time for the Council and indeed for the whole world. We hope that your leadership and wisdom can bridge the divisions that prevail in the Council. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Malaysia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We come before the Security Council under the gathering clouds of war. Millions of people around the world have openly rejected this war and believe, as we do, that it is not necessary. A war against Iraq will be deadly and destabilizing and will have far-reaching political, socio-economic and humanitarian consequences for all the countries of the world. For us in Africa, the impact of this pending war will indeed be crippling. It is for that reason that we appreciate the opportunity to share our views with the Council at this critical time.

The decision that the Security Council is about to take will undoubtedly transcend the immediate issue of Iraq. It appears to us that we are no longer debating the situation in Iraq and that country's full compliance with Security Council resolution 1441 (2002), but that we are currently defining a new international order that will determine how the international community addresses conflict situations in the future. This is an extremely serious issue that needs our careful consideration and that will have far-reaching implications as we progress into this new millennium.

We have to remind ourselves that the founders of the United Nations were motivated by an abhorrence of war and by a commitment to resolving international conflicts peacefully and through collective action. The Charter of the United Nations states that the Organization was founded "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind". It is that objective that we should keep central to our deliberations as we carefully progress in finding solutions to the current crisis so that we can ensure that weapons of mass destruction are completely removed from Iraq and so that we can thereby avoid war.

Our overall concern is premised on the belief that the members of the Security Council, who act on behalf of all Members of the United Nations, should discharge their duty in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. The devastation of war — which threatens the lives of innocent civilians whose voices are rarely listened to, and which is also staring into the eyes of the young men and women who are called upon to serve on the front lines — should always be a matter of last resort. War should not be a means of attaining objectives that contradict the Charter of the United Nations.

The Security Council must uphold the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Member States, in conformity with the Charter, and must remain sensitive to cultural, ethnic and religious differences. For us, the fundamental issue is the peaceful disarmament of Iraq. Resolution 1441 (2002) is about disarming Iraq through inspections. It is not a declaration of war. Neither is the use of military force the best way to bring about democracy or to improve human rights in any country.

The Security Council has recently heard from Mr. Hans Blix, Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), and from Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), that Iraq has been actively cooperating and that substantial progress has been made during the past month. The Al Samoud 2 missiles are being destroyed as we speak, and Iraq is in the process of accounting for past biological and chemical weapons programmes.

As the Council is aware, President Thabo Mbeki has reported to the Secretary-General on the visit to Iraq by a South African team of experts in the nuclear, biological, chemical and missile disarmament fields. South Africa sent its experts after several members of the Security Council had sought to draw a comparison between our own voluntary disarmament process and Iraq's compliance in terms of Security Council resolutions.

President Mbeki reported that, despite the difference in South Africa's experience with disarmament, our team stressed to the Iraqis the importance not only of taking the necessary steps to disarm, but also of building confidence in the credibility of their process through full compliance in terms of resolution 1441 (2002). South Africa indicated its willingness to interact further with the Secretary-General, UNMOVIC and the IAEA and to communicate to them such detail about the visit as may be considered necessary.

We wish to reaffirm our full confidence in the work of Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei and to support the professional work that they do. We believe that the Council can strengthen the work of the inspectors by endorsing a programme and a timeline for inspections, which Mr. Blix has already offered to present to the Council. We believe that any timetable developed without taking into account the programme of the inspectors can only lead to an unnecessary ultimatum for war. Furthermore, we believe that a deadline by the Council would be counterproductive and contradict both resolutions 1284 (1999) and 1441 (2002). As a result, we fail to see any need for a further resolution until all the provisions of resolutions 1284 (1999) and 1441 (2002) have been exhausted.

In conclusion, we wish to remind the Council that the peoples of the world are opposed to this war. Recently, the heads of State or Government of the African Union, the Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement and other international organizations reiterated their support for the full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions, and, at the same time, reiterated their opposition to a war against Iraq. Together with millions of people around the world, they want to see that Iraq is peacefully disarmed of any weapons of mass destruction.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of South Africa for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is Mr. Yahya Mahmassani, Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mahmassani (League of Arab States) *(spoke in Arabic)*: At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We have full confidence in your leadership and your wisdom, which eminently qualify you to conduct the work of the Security Council. I wish also to thank your predecessor, the Ambassador of Germany, who presided over the Security Council

during the month of February, with great effectiveness and competence, and whose efforts were crowned with success and accomplishments.

The decision taken at the Arab Summit, held at Sharm el-Sheikh on 1 March, categorically rejected any attack against Iraq or threat against the security or territorial integrity of any Arab State. It considered that any such attack would constitute a threat to the national security of all Arab States, and reaffirmed the need to find a peaceful solution to the Iraqi crisis in the context of international legitimacy, as represented by the Security Council.

That decision also called on all States to support Arab efforts aimed at averting the war and stated that that goal would be achieved through Iraq's full implementation of Security Council resolution 1441 (2002) and by granting the inspectors sufficient time to complete their mission.

The Arab Summit also recalled Iraq's assurances of its respect for the independence, sovereignty and security of the State of Kuwait. It also called on Iraq to cooperate in finding a rapid solution to the question of prisoners and detainees, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions; to return the remaining archives and properties; and to pursue policies of goodwill.

The report of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), presented by Mr. Blix, and the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), presented by Mr. ElBaradei, to the Council on 7 March, stated that positive achievements had been recorded in the conduct of the inspection process and noted the responsiveness and cooperation shown by Iraq. For this reason, we would reiterate the need to continue the inspections in order to close the Iraqi file and lift the sanctions imposed on it, in accordance with paragraph 22 of resolution 687 (1991).

Mr. ElBaradei's report of 7 March stated that:

(*spoke in English*)

> "The IAEA has made important progress ... there is no indication of resumed nuclear activities ... there is no indication that Iraq has attempted to import uranium since 1990 ... there is no indication that Iraq has attempted to import aluminium tubes for use in centrifuge enrichment." *(S/PV.4714, p. 8)*

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Mr. Blix stated the following:

(*spoke in English*)

> "We are able to perform professional no-notice inspections all over Iraq and to increase aerial surveillance. ... [The Al Samoud 2 missile] destruction undertaken constitutes a substantial measure of disarmament. ... Lethal weapons are being destroyed. ... initiatives that are now taken by the Iraqi side .. can be seen as active or even proactive. ... UNMOVIC is currently drafting the work programme. ... How much time would it take to resolve the key remaining disarmament tasks? ... It would not take years, nor weeks, but months [just months]. *(supra, pps. 3-6)*.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

In the light of the conclusions of the report of the inspectors, there is absolutely no justification for waging war against Iraq. We therefore wonder, why war? What present danger or looming threat make war imperative? The insistence on waging war at a time when inspections are proceeding vigorously towards the verification of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq poses questions as to whether the actual objective of such a war would be the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, or whether there are other aims and schemes.

The affairs of the Arab homeland and the development of its systems of government are to be decided by the peoples of the region, in accordance with their national and regional interests, free from any foreign intervention. Reports of changes to be imposed on the region and of intervention in its domestic affairs are offensive and unacceptable.

While we were hoping and waiting for the initiation of good offices to put an end to the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories and to the Arab-Israeli conflict, in accordance with the Arab initiative and relevant United Nations resolutions, we were surprised at the massing of armies in preparation for the invasion and occupation of Iraq. The danger that threatens the security and safety of the Arab nations is Israel's possession of weapons of mass destruction — chemical, biological and nuclear — and their delivery systems; Israel's continued occupation of the Arab territories; its policy of destruction against the Palestinian people; its rejection of Security Council

resolution 487 (1981), which provides for the placement of its nuclear programmes and capabilities under IAEA safeguards; and its rejection of the implementation of paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), which provides for the declaration of the Middle East as a zone free from weapons of mass destruction.

Why, then, be silent about the Israeli arsenal, Israel's violation of Security Council resolutions and its threat to the security and safety of Arab States?

The inspectors have asked for a few months to complete their task, in order to finalize their verification of the peaceful elimination of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Such a request is an insignificant price for averting a hideous and uneven war that will sow devastation and destruction, incite rage and violence and destabilize the Arab region and the entire world.

We are at a historic juncture that will determine the destiny of succeeding generations and the future of international legitimacy for a long time to come. The war that is being planned against Iraq will be a prelude to other wars. Humanity will revert to the pre-1939 period: principles and values will collapse, the strong will dominate the weak and chaos will reign supreme.

The Preamble of the Charter states that

> "We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Algeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Tension is now at its height and the international community is holding its breath as the Security Council prepares to take a painful and wrenching decision, fraught with consequences both for international peace and security — since the issue at hand is nothing less than the authorization of the use of force against a country whose people have for the past 25 years suffered the horrors of war and all types of privation — and for the Organization itself, which was committed at birth by its founding Charter to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". In these circumstances, it would have been improper, to say the very least, if not contrary to the spirit and the letter of the Charter, for this Council to take its decision alone and in a veiled manner, without hearing the voices of those who do not sit in this Chamber but who still have something to say on an issue of the gravest concern to them.

Yes, the Council must hear us — we the States Members of the United Nations above all — and, we hope, listen to us, because, in carrying out its duties with respect to international peace and security, it does so, ultimately and by the very provisions of the Charter that endows it with its daunting responsibility, on behalf of us all. Its decisions therefore commit us collectively and in solidarity, for better or for worse.

This is even more true now that doubt has gripped some of its non-permanent members, who are being subjected to unbearable pressure and who, faced with an impossible choice and caught up in a relentless machine, are seeking to find their bearings and to take a decision that would best serve the interests of the international community and the cause of peace and security throughout the world.

Yes, the Council must also hear the regional organizations and other groupings that have spoken out in recent weeks with remarkable unity at the level of their heads of State and Government — be it the European Union, the African Union, the Non-Aligned Movement, the League of Arab States or the Organization of the Islamic Conference — for a peaceful settlement to the crisis, the primacy of the role of the United Nations and respect for international legality.

It is all the more duty-bound to listen to do so because close cooperation between the Security Council and regional organizations is desirable, encouraged and clearly provided for by the very Charter of our Organization and, just this once, because all these bodies and regional groupings, the importance of which is hardly negligible, are calling on the Security Council in a remarkable outburst of unanimity to ensure that the logic of peace prevails over that of war.

Yes, the Security Council must lend an ear to international public opinion and civil society, which, in recent months, have tirelessly expressed, with force and conviction, their rejection of war and their

devotion to peace. This message has been sent with fervour by all religious leaders throughout the world, including His Holiness the Pope.

Indeed, in a world where borders are falling and humanity is coming in the face of adversity to see that it is both a single entity and highly vulnerable, this glass house in which we meet today has become the crucible of our common hopes and aspirations and cannot ignore the outcry of the outside world, but contrarily is duty-bound to legitimize its actions and enhance its authority by paying heed to world opinion.

Yes, finally and above all, the Security Council cannot reject with a mere wave of the hand the reports of the inspection missions that it itself created, dispatched and instructed to oversee the implementation of its resolutions. Indeed, what are Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei — to whom we pay a well-deserved tribute for their courage, selflessness and professionalism — asking for if not for just a few more months — not a few weeks, nor yet a few years — in which to conclude their work by obtaining Iraq's peaceful disarmament?

> "After a period of somewhat reluctant cooperation, there has been an acceleration of initiatives from the Iraqi side" (*S/PV.4714, p. 5*),

Mr. Blix has said before this Council. This assessment was made by a man in whom we have placed our confidence and of whom we should therefore be proud.

In fact, important developments have taken place in recent days, all of which testify to a healthy change of attitude in Iraq. These include the destruction of Al Samoud 2 missiles; the handing over of fragments of R-400 aerial bombs; the opportunity to analyse soil samples in areas where, according to the Iraqi authorities, VX gas and anthrax cultures have been destroyed; the remission of dozens of new documents; interviews with scientists without the presence of minders; and the overflight of Iraqi territory by United Nations aircraft.

Moreover, Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei have given clear denials of accusations and allegations made against Iraq, which only enhance the conviction of Member States, which have no choice but to trust the United Nations, that only impartial inspections, outside the play of power, can establish the facts beyond any doubt and lead, with clarity and respect for the law, to the disarmament of Iraq.

To be sure, such progress has been achieved only because the international community demonstrated its unity and resolve in unanimously adopting resolution 1441 (2002) and, through direct and ongoing supervision of the inspections, by keeping the pressure on all those who must cooperate with the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

To be sure, Iraq must do more to convince the inspectors that it has indeed eliminated the weapons of mass destruction that it had in the past. It must do so promptly and unambiguously in the interest of the Iraqi people, the peoples of the region and international peace and security. Pressure must therefore be maintained and the inspectors should be given more human and material resources and, above all, be able to count on increased cooperation from the Iraqi authorities.

Paradoxically, however, at the very moment when the hope is growing that Iraq will commit itself decisively to disarmament, the threat of an armed conflict has suddenly imposed itself and we now fear the worst.

The burning question that arises today is: Now that the inspections are beginning to bear fruit and that Iraq has entered into a phase of proactive cooperation with the inspectors, as required by resolution 1441 (2002), is it reasonable that the inspections should be abruptly cut short and that Iraq should be disarmed by force, at the risk of sacrificing hundreds of thousands of human lives; causing the ruin and destruction of the country; jeopardizing its unity and territorial integrity, and thus the stability and security of an entire region that is already highly unstable; and perhaps unleashing evil forces that may promote or provoke extreme actions by which we shall all suffer?

We feel that the answer is self-evident: Everything should be done to avoid the use of force. There are proposals on the table here in the Security Council that can enable the Council to solve this crisis threatening the very future of our Organization — if only the political will exists and if those who disagree with the manner of disarming Iraq make the effort to talk among themselves to understand one another. This can happen in rediscovered unity and in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter,

which are incumbent upon us all and which no one has the right to disregard.

In the face of such perils, Algeria once again expresses its deep concern at the threat of war now emerging. It hopes and prays for a peaceful settlement of the crisis and for respect by all for international legality. Algeria supports without reservation the efforts to achieve the disarmament of Iraq by peaceful means. In other words, disarmament should be carried out through inspections, no doubt enhanced, of targeted objectives, a more precise timetable, and the establishment by the head of UNMOVIC of a list of disarmament tasks that remain to be fulfilled. Disarmament also requires the effective cooperation of Iraq, which Algeria urges once more to comply scrupulously with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

What is at stake is the stability and security of the entire Middle East and, beyond that, international peace and security. Also at stake is the credibility and authority of the Security Council, which remains for us all, both large and small nations, the keystone of the system of collective security to which we have all freely adhered by becoming Members of the United Nations — credibility and authority that must be safeguarded at all costs. For there are other dangers and challenges, undoubtedly more imminent and more urgent, that threaten us. Who better than the Council can face them with the necessary legitimacy and wished-for success?

That credibility and authority will obviously be better safeguarded and enhanced if the Security Council finally undertakes, with the same determination and rigour, to see that its resolutions are respected everywhere and in all circumstances, beginning in that part of the world where Israel, a serial aggressor of its neighbours, flouts international legality and is quietly amassing in complete impunity the most deadly weapons of mass destruction and regularly threatens the States in the region. By demonstrating firmness with regard to that country and by endeavouring resolutely to achieve a just and final settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, The Security Council will demonstrate to all that it is truly an irreplaceable tool in the service of peace, justice and security throughout the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Algeria for his kinds words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Once again, for the third time in the past few months, the Security Council is taking up the issue of Iraq. The opportunity has been given to all Member States of the United Nations to express their points of view and opinions on this grave situation surrounding Iraq. This indeed underlines the gravity and timeliness of the issue, which threatens stability in the Arab Gulf region and which will have adverse effects and unpredictable repercussions for international peace and security.

The entire international community, represented by its Governments and peoples, has followed the reports by Mr. Blix, Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), and Mr. ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We have heard their opinions in many press conferences since then, and have seen their media appearances on television screens around the world.

The two reports have specific elements that we wish to underline. First, inspections are making concrete progress towards the genuine elimination of weapons of mass destruction. A second element is the call for giving the inspectors more time — not years or weeks, but some months. That call was reaffirmed by the Arab Summit held at Sharm-el-Sheikh, which called for giving the inspection teams a sufficient period of time to complete their mission in Iraq. The Summit also called for those inspection teams to continue to act objectively in carrying out their mission. Thirdly, the IAEA did not come to the conclusion that Iraq has revived its nuclear programme in the past four years.

That is the overall point of view of those internationally respected and credible international officials and professionals. We have confidence in them, and we call on Iraq to complete the implementation of resolution 1441 (2002).

I do not believe that it is necessary to state that today the Security Council stands at a pivotal and critical juncture. The way the Council deals with this

vital issue will have deep repercussions on international relations, now and for decades to come. We therefore urge the Council members to reaffirm their commitment to the Charter and the resolutions of the United Nations. We call on them to settle international disputes by peaceful means in order to avoid a war that would have negative repercussions for all.

The Arab Summit held in Egypt on 1 March rejected any attack on Iraq. It rejected the use of threats to the security and integrity of any Arab State. It called on all States to support Arab efforts to avoid war. The Arab States called for giving sufficient time to inspection teams to complete their mission in Iraq. Finally, the Arab Summit stressed the Council's responsibility to avoid harming Iraq and its people and to maintain the independence, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

Egypt reaffirms its adherence to those Arab positions. In that context, Egypt has been active in the ministerial committee created by the Summit, which last week undertook intense contacts in New York. The committee will visit Baghdad in the next few days in order to ensure Iraq's continued constructive cooperation with the United Nations within the framework of all relevant resolutions, the latest of which is resolution 1441 (2002).

The Middle East, whether in the Gulf region or in Palestine, needs to attain the objectives of peace and stability. It must give its peoples the opportunity for economic and social development and growth in order that they may all enjoy well-being. No doubt the deteriorating, even dire, circumstances in Palestine and the attempts to break the will of the Palestinian people, who resist occupation, will not help in realizing those hopes for growth and development. They will not give freedom and independence to this people, who have long suffered and whose rights have been usurped.

We advocate a just and comprehensive peace in that sensitive part of the world. We call for all conditions to be provided to reach that end. The right of peoples to self-determination must be protected. As proposed by my President, Hosni Mubarak, weapons of mass destruction must be eliminated. The Charter and United Nations resolutions must be respected.

Therefore, we urge the international community to give the inspection regime the necessary opportunity to achieve security and peace in the region, which has suffered for so long and has known much tragedy. War would have serious consequences. Humanity and international relations would suffer from war. This makes it a duty for all to work seriously to avoid war, save lives, to protect interests and safeguard the noble principles that mankind has built on the rubble of the tragedy of the Second World War, when humanity said, "Never again".

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nambiar (India): We congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of March and express our appreciation to you for convening this open debate on an issue that has continued to engage the anxious attention of the Council, as it has of the entire world community. My delegation addressed this issue a fortnight ago in the Council. Therefore, I shall be brief today.

We are grateful to the Mr. Hans Blix and Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, the heads of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), respectively, for their briefings on 7 March on the progress of inspections since their last report to the Council. The reports do indicate progress in cooperation extended by Iraq to UNMOVIC and IAEA.

We recognize the growing atmosphere of foreboding tension within the Council as it comes to grips with how to proceed with the matter in the immediate future. As the discussions enter a critical phase, it is important to underline that our focus should be on the need to secure the disarmament of Iraq without resorting to armed force as far as possible. That this requires full, active and immediate compliance by Iraq with resolution 1441 (2002) and earlier resolutions is obvious. But it also requires a strong unity of purpose on the part of the Security Council so that the credibility of the United Nations is not weakened.

We believe that the universe of discourse should remain the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Council. Iraq must cooperate actively with the inspection process and comply fully with those resolutions. Of course, the international community has to strike a balance between the objective of achieving

Iraq's full compliance with United Nations resolutions and the means adopted to reach that goal. This balance can best be achieved through a collective decision of the international community through the United Nations. There is a need to persevere in this direction by establishing clear thresholds, if necessary. If giving more time and laying down clearer criteria would help the process of United Nations-based decision-making, that should be given a chance.

India has consistently advocated a peaceful resolution of the Iraq issue. We are as conscious as any other delegation of the incalculable costs in human and material terms that a war would impose on the region and beyond. We maintain that force should be resorted to only as the very last, unavoidable option, and only as authorized by the Security Council. We have also called for steps to ensure that any measures taken by the Council would not have an adverse impact on the humanitarian situation, which is already extremely difficult. The Council should also bear in mind the alleviation of the situation of the Iraqi people. Finally, the measures taken by the Security Council should ensure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq.

As we stated on 17 October 2002, what the Council does at this juncture could well represent a defining moment in the way the relations among States are ordered. At that time we called for the active exploration, under United Nations auspices, of possible alternatives to avoid recourse to military action or the use of force. We stressed the need to safeguard the interests of the countries of the region as well as of those who have vital stakes in the region. These considerations remain as valid today, since very little has changed in the situation.

If the actions of the Council are to be seen to possess legitimacy, they must issue from a body that is united and that acts responsibly to ensure compliance by the regime in Iraq, ensures stability in the immediate neighbourhood and safeguards international peace and security in the region as a whole.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Own (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to say what a pleasure it is to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the current month. I wish you every success in your work. I would also like to acknowledge the tremendous efforts made by your predecessor, the representative of Germany, during his presidency of the Council last month.

Once again, for the third time, we are meeting in the Council Chamber, which represents international legitimacy, to take up the Iraqi crisis. This is the single most serious crisis faced by the world since the end of the cold war. We are also witnessing for the first time since then the emergence of a clear will by the international community to reject the methods that were applied throughout that period of imposing decisions on this Council and using it as a cover for actions that run counter to the purposes and principles of international legitimacy.

The international community has spoken unambiguously, at the State and Government levels — at the high-level meetings of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the League of Arab States, the African Union and the European Union — or at the grass-roots level, through mass demonstrations, especially in Europe and America, and has thus shown that it rejects war or the threat of war against the people of Iraq. It has done so, because it has found the case for war unconvincing and views it as unjust and unwarranted. This is particularly true given that Iraq has accepted resolution 1441 (2002) unconditionally and without restrictions and with clear political will — a will expressed at the highest level — and begun to implement it in full. Iraq has provided effective cooperation, as is borne out by the reports submitted by Mr. Hans Blix, Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, and Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Those reports affirmed the importance and benefit of continued inspections and called upon the Council to provide more time — not weeks or years, but months.

I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to Mr. Blix to promptly supply a list of the outstanding questions with regard to weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, given the substantive importance of this question.

In spite of these positive developments, it seems that some States are still marching — indeed, rushing — towards war. They are carrying out an unwarranted media campaign aimed at distorting the

facts and providing information to justify such an approach — information that has been shown to be invalid by the inspections. Such States are also acting outside the scope of international law when they declare their desire to change the regime in Iraq. Such an objective is outside the purview of resolution 1441 (2002). That resolution did not set out a specific time frame for the monitoring and inspection process; that process will eventually lead to the peaceful disarming of Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction.

This is a historic moment; it is the first time since the end of the cold war that the international community has firmly stood up to those who have gone against its collective will. In this regard, we express our appreciation for the States members of the Security Council that have refused, despite blackmail and threat, to acquiesce to the orders that some States have become accustomed to issuing in the Council whenever they want the cover of legitimacy for acts aimed at the preservation of their and their allies' economic and political interest, even at the cost of causing devastation and suffering for other peoples. We are certain that history and the international community will not forget this brave and sincere stand on the part of those States in the interests of consecrating international legitimacy in the service of the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and the promotion of international peace and security.

While strongly affirming the decisions taken at the summit meetings of the Non-Aligned Movement in Kuala Lumpur, of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and of the Arab League, as well as the declarations by the African Union and the European Union regarding Iraq, we strongly reject war as an option for eliminating proscribed Iraqi weapons. We would like to issue a warning about the tragedies and human suffering that would result from such a war for all parties and the repercussions that would widen the circle of violence and terrorism and create instability, not only in the Middle East but throughout the world.

Such a war would have adverse effects that would undermine the strength and coherence of the international alliance established to combat global terrorism. The fact that some are insisting on moving towards war, even without a mandate from the Security Council, sets a dangerous precedent for the United Nations and endangers the very survival of this great international Organization, which has maintained international peace and security for the past five decades.

In conclusion, we are confident that the promotion of peace and security in the Middle East region and neighbouring areas can be achieved only through a just and comprehensive settlement of all outstanding problems and issues through resort to reason, which has been given by God to man alone of all His creatures; the renunciation of the use of force and the voluntary and full renunciation of all weapons of mass destruction; the transformation of the region into one free from weapons of mass destruction, through effective international arrangements and actions without discrimination or exception; the granting to the Palestinian people of their full rights, the establishment of an independent State on all their national soil and the withdrawal of all forces from Arab territories under Israeli occupation; support for the inspections and the efforts of the inspectors, whose success is undeniable; and the immediate lifting of the sanctions imposed against Iraq since 1991.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to join earlier speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month, expressing appreciation to your predecessor and thanking you for having convened this meeting. I should also like to associate my delegation with the statement made by the representative of Malaysia, reflecting the views of the Non-Aligned Movement.

I would also like to thank the United Nations weapons inspectors, skilfully led by Mr. Hans Blix and Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for their professionalism and the comprehensive reports that they have thus far presented to the Security Council.

The unanimous decision taken by the Security Council and the deployment of international weapons inspectors in Iraq demonstrated that the international community, represented by this Council, was able to act together in the interests of attaining a common goal. The big question mark hanging over us now relates to why the course the Security Council so wisely embarked upon should be so prematurely aborted. At a time when the chief inspectors have recommended that

they be given a relatively short time to complete the work mandated by the Council, the persistent question of the entire international community is why there should be a rush to war.

It is true that the disarmament of Iraq should not have dragged on for 12 years. It is also true that the Iraqi Government should have fulfilled its obligations much earlier. The fragmentary cooperation on the part of Iraq is a main cause of — or at least a main pretext for — the current crisis. As the victim of one of the two wars of aggression, the major victim of the harbouring of terrorism and the only State victim of these weapons of mass destruction, we certainly understand the frustration of the international community. By the same token, as a country that in the span of two decades has suffered directly as a result of one war and faced the enormous consequences of another, we know that yet another war in the Persian Gulf region is not something that should be easily and hurriedly resorted to. Two wrongs will not make a right. When it comes to a devastating war in which thousands upon thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians will undoubtedly perish, it would be morally and politically unacceptable if considerations such as hot weather, moonless nights, troop fatigue and the like were to take precedence.

I do not think that I need to recall how high the stakes are. We all have an idea of the unparalleled disaster that a possible war could bring about. The humanitarian crisis in Iraq and in neighbouring countries may take on catastrophic dimensions. The threat of Iraq's disintegration and of instability in the region is significant. The fact that extremism stands to benefit the most from a war is undeniable. There are worrying signs that the right of the Iraqi people to self-determination may be among the first casualties of a possible war. Neither the Iraqi people nor the international community can accept any encroachment on the sovereignty and independence of a Member State of the United Nations, no matter how short some may claim that encroachment to be at the outset.

Moreover, the stakes have already gone far beyond Iraq. The rush to war has already placed the current functioning international system on the line. It is quite irresponsible to rejoice over the fantasy of a post-United Nations world, as a hawkish columnist did yesterday. We fully support the warning issued by the Secretary-General yesterday, and again today in his thoughtful article in the *Wall Street Journal*. My Government is equally gravely concerned over the outright attempts under way to undermine the United Nations system and the achievements that humankind has incrementally accomplished over a very long period of time to institutionalize the rule of law at the international level.

Against the backdrop of any realistic scenario, all of which would amount to no less than a real nightmare, any chance, as slim as it may appear, should be seized. War is such a dangerously imperceptive solution, particularly when innovative proposals and ideas to strengthen inspections, to set clear targets, to remove regional and international anxieties about Iraqi behaviour and to guarantee the right of the Iraqi people to self-determination, while sparing the region from another war and maintaining Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity, are already on the table.

In that context, it is first and foremost incumbent upon the Iraqi Government to take irreversible steps to reassure its neighbours and the international community that it genuinely wishes to live in peace and to fully implement all its obligations under various Security Council resolutions, starting with continuing and expanding active cooperation with weapons inspectors.

While members of the international community, including my Government, are unanimous about the need to fully implement the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, the rush to war is clearly undermining the momentum built up to bring this crisis to a successful conclusion. The division and tension that rush creates is alienating world public opinion and the great majority of Governments, thus creating serious doubts about the agenda behind it. The different, and sometimes conflicting, reasons invoked to justify a premature recourse to military action cannot but significantly strengthen doubts. And that is a new layer of doubts that are added to the previous layers that resulted from selectivity in enforcing United Nations resolutions, particularly on Palestine, and treaties on non-proliferation, more specifically as regards Israel. Allowing the Security Council to have the final word in bringing the current crisis to a successful conclusion, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and international law, would certainly be a significant step in the right direction.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Australia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): Allow me to reiterate, Mr. President, the words that I was fortunate enough to be able to offer yesterday in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month, as well as to express Australia's pleasure at the steady hand that we know you will bring to the Council at this crucial time.

We are at a historic moment for the Council and for international security. The architecture of international peace and security, in which we — all of us — have invested so much over the past 50 years, hangs in the balance. The Council's decisions could either strengthen that architecture or gravely undermine it. Members of this body face a weighty responsibility to ensure both the disarmament of Iraq and the continuing relevance of the Security Council in global affairs.

Four months after the adoption of resolution 1441 (2002), Australia does not believe that Iraq has shown a change of heart that will lead to its full and verifiable disarmament. In his report to this body on 7 March, Mr. Blix was unable to state that Iraq had taken the fundamental decision to disarm. In fact, no one, including United Nations weapons inspectors, has been able to describe Iraq's cooperation as immediate, unconditional and active.

We believe that Iraq has therefore fallen short of what resolution 1441 (2002) required it to do. Its actions so far do not permit any other conclusion. The key question for the Council, as the primary multilateral instrument of international peace and security, is what it will do about this situation. Will it accept the small, belated steps taken by Iraq as adequate? We believe it should not. The commencement of the destruction of Al Samoud 2 missiles is not a reason to relinquish the pressure on Iraq to disarm. Developing missiles with a range beyond 150 kilometres is something Iraq should never have done in the first place: this very body expressly forbade it. Iraq's belated discoveries of the R-400 bombs raise questions about why it was suddenly able to find weapons. Other developments, such as the handing over of some documents, are redolent of Iraq's tired tactic of seeking to pacify the international community, rather than signalling the beginning of true cooperation.

Those reluctant offerings were only brought about through the enormous pressure on Iraq created by the massing of military forces in the region. Even that minimum cooperation would stop if the pressure were removed. We have seen that pattern before, and no doubt will see it again unless the Security Council is united and acts decisively.

The point is that the international community did not ask that Iraq should put on a display of piecemeal cooperation. The international community has demanded Iraq's unconditional disarmament, verified by inspectors. Very few outstanding disarmament questions have been resolved and many remain. We still do not know what Iraq has done with 6,500 chemical munitions, with a potential agent content of 1,000 tonnes of chemical agent; 8,500 litres of anthrax; 650 kilograms of bacterial growth media, which could be used to make 5,000 litres of anthrax; 360 tonnes of bulk chemical agent; 1.5 tonnes of VX and 3,000 tonnes of precursor chemicals. Without full Iraqi cooperation, none of those and other questions will be adequately resolved. The inspectors will never be able to do their job properly. It is time that all the members of the Security Council acknowledge that. Giving inspectors more time, or giving them additional capabilities, will mean nothing unless Iraq genuinely cooperates.

We all have a fundamental interest in strengthening the architecture of international security. We want to see the Security Council reinvigorated, not sidelined by the situation it faces. Avoiding a decision or delaying a decision will undermine that objective.

The Security Council must recognize that threats to international security have changed. It must deal with the borderless scourge of international terrorism and with the risk of illicit trade in prohibited and dual-use items. The threat of terrorism is made worse by the possibility that terrorists could get hold of chemical and biological weapons. For that reason, it is urgent that the Council confront this risk by disarming nations that build those weapons and defy international non-proliferation norms. Failure to do so will both increase the immediate threat and set a precedent that we will all come to regret.

Creating a more secure world and underpinning our system of non-proliferation require resolve. The Security Council must mean what it says, and countries must live up to their obligations. The Council expressed its resolve when, in its eighteenth resolution on the issue, it decided to give Iraq one last chance in resolution 1441 (2002). Iraq has failed to take that chance. But even now, the best and perhaps last hope of achieving a peaceful solution is for the Security Council to send a clear message to Iraq through a new resolution that it must disarm fully.

In September last year the Secretary-General addressed the General Assembly, urging Iraq to comply with its obligations and stressing that, if its defiance continued, the Security Council must face its responsibilities. Six months have gone by. Iraq has not complied with its obligations. Difficult though it is, it is time for the Council to face its responsibilities.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Australia for the kind words he addressed to me.

Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I should like to draw members' attention to the fact that there are still 42 speakers inscribed on my list. After two hours of debate, we have been able to hear only 11. My hope is that we shall be able to hear the maximum number of speakers this evening so that we can conclude a bit earlier tomorrow. I renew the appeal I made at the outset: I should like statements not to exceed seven minutes' time. I thank members for their understanding.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Canada. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this important meeting. It is entirely appropriate that members of the Security Council are meeting today with all Members of the United Nations. It is difficult to exaggerate the stakes that today's Council deliberations represent for all the States gathered in this Chamber. Peace and war hang in the balance.

The peoples that we represent have invested their hopes in the integrity and the usefulness of this institution. They are counting on its wisdom, its experience, its resolve and, above all, its willingness to decide — humanely, in their names — on a response to the challenge posed by the Iraqi situation. It is therefore in their names that we call upon the Council to acquit its solemn obligations to them, to examine every compromise and every possibility, and to spare no effort to solve this problem together.

(*spoke in English*)

The first step to regaining the unity that is indispensable to success is to recognize that positions on both sides are held with deep conviction and that both sides have valid arguments.

An open-ended inspection process would relieve the pressure on Iraq to disarm. The record leaves no doubt that the Iraqi authorities have begun to cooperate only because they face heavy outside pressure, including the indispensable build-up of military force by the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and others, and the willingness of the international community to back diplomacy with force if necessary.

On the other hand, a foreshortened inspections process would create worrying doubt as to whether war were indeed the last resort. And military action without a Security Council mandate in this case would risk undermining respect for international law and would raise questions about the future viability of this crucial body, its authority and its efficacy.

The division of the Council has, regrettably, drawn the focus of the world away from the crucial issue of disarming Iraq and has shifted it, instead, onto diplomatic competition. That serves no one's interests but Saddam Hussain's.

On 18 February, the Government of Canada proposed a set of ideas to bridge this very destructive divide. We suggested that the key remaining disarmament tasks be established and prioritized by the weapons inspectors and that a deadline be established for Iraq to implement them. We agree with Mr. Blix that, while cooperation by Iraq must be immediate and proactive, disarmament and verification cannot be instantaneous. More time is needed for the inspectors to do the job that this body has given them to do so that we can all judge whether Iraqi cooperation goes beyond process to substance. More time for inspections, however, will be useful only if Iraq implements resolution 1441 (2002) and preceding resolutions, and that means a deadline.

Since the Council last met with the general membership to discuss the situation in Iraq, there has

undeniably been some progress, including on the nuclear file. We have seen encouraging instances of actual disarmament, particularly with respect to missile stocks. United Nations inspectors continue to verify the destruction of proscribed missiles, munitions are being unearthed, interviews on the inspectors' terms are beginning to take place, unimpeded and immediate access to any and all sites is now a matter of course, no nuclear materials have been found, and apparently no nuclear weapons programme has been reconstituted.

But we have also seen signs of Iraqi business as usual, and we have been disturbed that Iraq has not done much more, much sooner. If Iraq has nothing to hide, it has nothing to fear from facilitating private meetings of its scientists and officials with weapons inspectors outside Iraq. We still do not have the answers we must have to crucial questions about Iraq's past chemical and biological weapons production and destruction and about its residual capabilities and possible current programmes. We have yet to see the evidence that would convince us that Iraq no longer possesses or intends to reacquire weapons of mass destruction, and we still fear that the opposite may be true.

The Government of Canada believes that a message of absolute clarity and urgency needs to be sent from the Security Council to the Government of Iraq as to what is required of it, and when.

First, we believe that Iraq's leadership should be asked to publicly direct all levels of the Iraqi Government to take all necessary disarmament decisions in the interests of the Iraqi people and of the region. Saddam Hussain has seemed to stand apart from the disarmament process, in apparent disdain of Council decisions. That cannot continue if Iraqi protestations of cooperation are to be believed.

Secondly, the Council should ask Mr. Blix to bring forward the programme of work urgently, within the week, including the list of key remaining disarmament tasks that the Government of Iraq must perform. Mr. Blix should establish the priorities among those tasks, particularly the biological and chemical weapons priorities, especially concerning bulk quantities of anthrax, the disposition of the chemical agent VX and evidence regarding chemical weapons shells and bombs and other biological and chemical munitions. He should also stipulate the urgent and imperative steps required of the Government of Iraq to implement those tasks.

Thirdly, at the same time, it is obvious that disarmament and verification cannot be instantaneous. We believe, therefore, that the Council should set a deadline of three weeks for Iraq to demonstrate conclusively that it is implementing these tasks and is cooperating actively and effectively on substance, on real disarmament, and not only on process.

Fourthly, to keep the pressure on Iraq, the Council should consider authorizing Member States now to eventually use all necessary means to force compliance, unless, on the basis of ongoing inspectors' reports, it concludes that the Government of Iraq is complying.

We are convinced that Iraq is substantially contained and that, if it cooperates, the disarmament of Iraq can be had without a shot being fired.

If, by the deadline, the Government of Iraq were found by the Security Council to be cooperating fully and actively with the inspectors and disarming or otherwise complying with United Nations resolutions, a further deadline could be set. These deadlines could be repeated until the disarmament goals of resolutions 1441 (2002) and 1284 (1999) were met and we were all confident that enhanced, ongoing verification and monitoring were likely to be effective.

Finally, a sustained inspection and monitoring system would need to be put in place after verified disarmament in order to give the international community confidence and to alert it immediately if the Government of Iraq were to seek to re-establish proscribed weapons programmes.

The United Nations and the Security Council are at a watershed.

The Council's decision on Iraq will not only affect the lives and well-being of the Iraqi people and of their neighbours, but also have an impact on regional stability and the security of all of us.

The Government and the people of Canada want a peaceful resolution to this crisis. Like the vast majority of the United Nations membership, we oppose military intervention, except as a last resort.

We understand the challenge the Council faces. We ask only that it spare no effort to unite to meet this crucial challenge and to ensure that the Government of

Iraq is no longer a threat to its neighbours and to international peace and security.

The Council's decision will determine whether the peoples of the countries represented in this Chamber will have been justified in putting their faith in the promise of the founding ideas of the United Nations.

May the Council find the wisdom and the will to ensure, as well, that the United Nations emerges from this crisis enhanced, not diminished, so that it can, to quote the opening line of the Charter, "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", which is its most solemn purpose.

For our part, the people and the Government of Canada will support the judgments of the weapons inspectors, and we will respect the decisions of the Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Switzerland. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Staehelin (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I should like to take this opportunity, Sir, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of March and to wish you every success in your work. I wish also to thank Ambassador Pleuger for the excellent work he did last month.

Switzerland has taken note of the report presented by Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei to the public meeting of the Security Council held on 7 March. It can be concluded from this interim report that, despite undeniable gaps with regard to the cooperation between the Iraqi Government and the United Nations, real progress has recently been recorded in the identification and destruction of prohibited arms in Iraq's possession.

The process of destroying the Al Samoud 2 missiles, which has just begun, under the supervision of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), is a concrete result of the diplomatic and military pressure currently being exerted on the Iraqi Government. Furthermore, Switzerland notes that UNMOVIC and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) do not have, at this moment, conclusive information about Iraq's continued possession or production of weapons of mass destruction.

Concerning the provisions of Security Council resolution 1284 (1999), which continues to guide a considerable part of the inspectors' work, Switzerland welcomes the proposal of the UNMOVIC Executive Director to submit to the Security Council, within a very short time, a list of all outstanding questions concerning disarmament, as well as a programme of work aimed at achieving, within a reasonable time-frame, the objectives of Security Council resolution 1441 (2002).

In current circumstances — that is to say, for as long as, according to United Nations experts, the inspections continue to yield results — Switzerland considers that priority must be given to disarming Iraq by peaceful means.

At this stage, Switzerland can only support initiatives that aim to grant the UNMOVIC and IAEA inspectors a reasonable amount of time to complete their work of inspection, verification and destruction of arms which have been proscribed by the relevant Security Council resolutions.

If all attempts to disarm Iraq by peaceful means fail, Switzerland invites the members of the Security Council to see to it that any decision taken on the basis of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations includes the unconditional demand on all parties to a possible conflict to respect, and to ensure respect for, international humanitarian law.

Moreover, Switzerland recalls the paramount importance it accords to the humanitarian aspects of the crisis which has affected the Iraqi people for the past 12 years, and it reiterates its concern about the potentially destructive effects of a possible military conflict, in particular in the humanitarian and social spheres. The dependence of some 60 per cent of the Iraqi population on food and medical supplies through the oil-for-food programme; the worrisome moral and physical condition of millions of Iraqis, in particular of women, children and the elderly; and the run-down state of medical and sanitation infrastructure in Iraq also argue in favour of the continuation and strengthening of the inspections, with a view to achieving the disarmament of Iraq by peaceful means.

Finally, Switzerland once again strongly urges the Iraqi authorities to cooperate fully, actively and unconditionally with the United Nations inspectors. In view of the fact that the inspections cannot be continued indefinitely, a resolute and immediate

commitment by Iraq is absolutely indispensable in order fully to shed light, in the near future, on the still-unanswered questions concerning disarmament.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Switzerland for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Turkey. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Cengizer (Turkey): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on Guinea's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council at such a crucial juncture and to wish you every success in this important duty. Our appreciation goes to your predecessor, the German presidency, for bringing its task to completion with care and diligence throughout, at an equally critical period.

Turkey is happy to align itself with the statement of the European Union. On the other hand, Turkey, for a number of reasons, be it our principled approach to the ongoing crisis as a neighbour of Iraq or be it the vote cast by the Turkish Parliament, has been at the forefront of the news during the three weeks since we last gathered in this Chamber. Hence, the reason for us to avail ourselves of this opportunity to reiterate the basic considerations that are still behind our considered action in this instance and to clarify at the same time what has been the subject of some speculation lately.

Before I do so, let me first say that Turkey understands the many difficulties Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei have encountered, along with the actual intricacies they have to address while fulfilling their mandate. It is a fact that considerable progress has been registered in the inspection process since 18 February, when we last spoke before this Council. Yet we note with dismay and foreboding that Iraq, even at this hour, has yet to show full, immediate, active and unconditional cooperation with the United Nations weapons inspectors. Regrettably, the course of action Iraq has chosen to follow — disgruntled rather than cooperative — lies at the centre of the present difficulties this Council is faced with, threatening its vital unity at this crucial time.

However entrenched the differences that bar the Council from reaching a united stand may seemingly be, we call upon the members once again to recognize that cohesion in this Council will not only serve the legitimacy of any action that may ensue upon these deliberations, but will reinforce the credibility of the United Nations. The Council's cohesion will ensure that the decisions reached by this body are heard loud and clear in every part of the globe. Diplomacy must offer its best at this very critical moment.

Turkey has been earnestly seeking a peaceful solution to the present crisis, which has been caused by the non-compliance of Iraq with the many relevant decisions taken by this Council over the course of no less than 12 years. As a matter of fact, Turkey has done everything in its power to let wisdom and foresight reign. Indeed, we have every reason to seek a peaceful outcome as a neighbouring country which has felt the vicious impact of the instability in our region, especially after the Gulf War.

Yet, for exactly the same reasons — that is, because of the very fact that we are a neighbouring country to Iraq, destined to seek friendship and cooperation with its people — we have been taking precautionary measures that are geared to lessen and mitigate the many adverse affects of a looming armed conflict. Understandably, we have many preoccupations that continue to occupy the forefront of our minds. These are manifold in nature and stem from a number of geostrategic, political, military and economic considerations, all based on lived-through, real-time experience. These we should not be expected to let fester and assume that they will somehow take care of themselves. These are issues that do not lend themselves to be treated, at least by us, merely as different outcomes of different scenarios. We are not only very near to the area of conflict — we are side-by-side with it. Hence, we cannot readily contemplate just any outcome.

Likewise, presenting these manifold considerations out of their true context, and depicting Turkey as haggling over a price tag as if this has been a pecuniary affair, has been a gross disservice to a country and its people that have been a bastion of stability in that region. Those scribblers around the world who have done so have in fact diminished themselves and their arguments, but Turkey has arisen once again to the fore in its true colours.

It is in the context that I have tried to describe that Turkey has been unequivocal in pronouncing the principles that guide us vis-à-vis Iraq during these difficult times. We have been following a transparent

and open policy and we have repeatedly made clear the basic tenets of our policy, which we will continue to safeguard. Let me reiterate these once more to this body.

First, the territorial integrity, national sovereignty and political unity of Iraq should be kept intact. Secondly, the future of Iraq should be decided by the Iraqi people in their entirety, not by some of them. Thirdly, the natural riches of Iraq belong to Iraq and the Iraqi people as a whole — again, not to some of them. It is these basic principles that we will continue to safeguard.

It is because of our open adherence to these principles that I say this here today: There is no concealed agenda on our part. I can also say this: As we have nothing to hide, we do not wish others to hide anything from us. It is because of our adherence to these principles that we are set against any attempts at faits accomplis and other actions that may hinder or run counter to the emergence of the required democratic process in Iraq. No one should try to prejudge the democratic process that these principles guard and embody at one and at the same time. It is because of these, yet again, that I can say that any decision reached by the Iraqi people is acceptable to Turkey as long as it is reached democratically and through the participation of all.

I should make it especially clear that Turkey does not intend to shut out the Kurds living in northern Iraq. With them, we enjoy a multitude of human bonds, including kinship and history. We have wrought a shared wisdom and moral and cultural values. We have been living together for 1,000 years. Shame on those soothsayers that pray for enmity in the belief that such outright conflict would serve their parochial designs! Let me say just this: Even when terror was rampant in Turkey, the Turks and Kurds showed that their time-honoured ties are strong enough to resist any provocation whatsoever.

We look forward to the day when this crisis ends and when we can reach lasting and viable grounds on which the peoples of the region and Iraq — including Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen — can start to benefit from the fruits of stability. We wish to see Iraq start forging a future in which it will become a respected member of the international community whose human, cultural and natural riches benefit its people and the region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Turkey for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Norway. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei have again presented a thorough and detailed report of the work of the weapons inspectors and their findings.

It is positive that Iraq is now cooperating more actively and that there has been some progress in the inspections. The destruction of the Al Samoud 2 missiles is encouraging. This progress is a result of a united and firm stand by the international community. It confirms that the pressure on Iraq must be maintained.

We deeply regret, however, that Iraq has not been cooperating with the inspectors, as required by resolution 1441 (2002). The Iraqi cooperation with the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has not been immediate, unconditional and active. The inspectors have not received the information necessary to draw conclusions about Iraqi possession of weapons of mass destruction.

In this situation, the inspections should continue, as long as they can produce meaningful and concrete results. At the same time, it is important to set a time limit and clear criteria for Iraq to comply with resolution 1441 (2002). The inspections cannot go on indefinitely. The time limit must be short and precise, but achievable.

There is still a possibility to achieve the peaceful disarmament of Iraq. That is what Norway will continue to work for. Much is at stake. The onus is now on Iraq. This is the last opportunity to reach a peaceful outcome. Iraq must not miss this opportunity.

We know that the United Nations agencies are preparing for a possible humanitarian crisis in Iraq in the event of a military conflict. Norway stands ready to fully contribute to those efforts. In such humanitarian operations, the United Nations must be given a leading and coordinating role.

In the present situation it is essential that the Security Council stands united in its efforts to disarm

Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction. We urge all members of the Council to stand up to their responsibility. This is crucial for the role of this Council, for the people of Iraq and for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Brazil. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Moura (Brazil): The position of the Brazilian people and Government is well known. Iraq must be disarmed peacefully. Iraq should fully abide by Security Council resolutions. Force should be used only as a last resort and only when fully authorized by the Council.

Today, the Brazilian Minister of Foreign Relations, Mr. Celso Amorim, met with Secretary-General Kofi Annan in The Hague. He delivered to him a letter from President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, in which the President restates that Brazil stands ready to cooperate with any initiative towards finding a peaceful solution to the crisis.

As we said before, as there is still hope for peace, we must insist on it.

As stated by many speakers at last Friday's debate, the decisions to be taken by the Council have acquired a dimension that goes beyond the question of Iraq. They could have adverse and longstanding effects on the structures of international peace and security.

It is thus essential that the voice of Member States non-members of the Security Council be heard once again. Brazil is following the situation with great concern. As indications mount that we are heading towards a war, we are compelled to consider the enormous costs involved.

War always takes a heavy toll on human life and is not, at this stage, a plausible alternative to diplomacy. Any military conflict will require the expenditure of an immense amount of resources. In global economic terms, a war will certainly aggravate the recession, which is already victimizing economies worldwide, especially those of the most vulnerable developing nations. In humanitarian terms, a war could bring enormous desolation and suffering. A war could also further destabilize the volatile situation in the region.

Our collective effort in the war against the scourge of terrorism would be severely hampered by radical reactions. Even more so if actions are taken without regard for decisions arrived at by the Council.

The reports presented to the Council by Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei indicate that some progress has been achieved. The presentations also stressed the fact that more time — not an indefinite period of time — is needed to properly carry out the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council. Some proposals have been put forward in this regard and should be fully explored so that inspectors can finalize their work and present their conclusions to the Council.

The members of the Security Council have upon them a very crucial decision to take. We can only hope that once a decision is taken, it will be respected by all of us. It is the only way to ensure the authority of the Organization.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of New Zealand. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mackay (New Zealand): Three weeks ago, the New Zealand Government's statement to the Council urged that the diplomatic process be allowed to run its course with respect to the crisis over Iraq. It also urged that Iraq move rapidly to provide the information and cooperation required of it to avert the catastrophe which war would bring to its people.

The New Zealand Government has placed considerable weight on the weapons inspection process as providing a route to the disarmament of Iraq. As long as the weapons inspectors report that they are making genuine progress, the New Zealand Government believes that their work should continue.

Since the open debate in the Council on 18 February, the inspectors have reported again. Their reports make it clear that while many questions remain to be answered, real progress is also being made. As Mr. Blix has said, the destruction of the Al Samoud 2 missiles is not a matter of breaking toothpicks.

On this basis, the New Zealand Government position remains as it was stated on 18 February. We do not support military action against Iraq without a mandate from the Security Council, and we do not believe that the Council would be justified in giving

that mandate at this time. As Mr. Blix has stated, the inspection process needs months rather than days.

We share the frustration of other members of the Council and the international community at the slow pace of Iraqi disarmament over a long period of time. But now, when the inspection and disarmament process is finally gaining traction, is not, in our view, the time to abandon it in favour of the use of force.

The use of force can be authorized by the Security Council as a last resort to uphold its resolutions. But in view of the recent reports that this Council has received from both the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), this is not a time of last resort.

All members of the Council share the same objective: the disarmament of Iraq. Debate has raged not over the objective, but over the timetable for and the means of achieving it. It is distressing to my Government that the debate has strained longstanding friendships between nations. That strain will be magnified if the next steps taken to resolve the crisis do not have broad international support. The New Zealand Government therefore urges the Security Council to continue to support the inspection and disarmament process it has in place while it is getting results.

Iraq should not mistake the strong preference of countries like New Zealand for a diplomatic solution for tolerance of its failure to comply in full. This is not a time for Iraq to be practising the diplomacy of brinkmanship. Iraq should act immediately to comply in full with all requirements laid down by the Security Council and the weapons inspectors. Only by so doing can it be certain that the catastrophe of war will not be visited on its people.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Cuba. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are deeply honoured to see Guinea preside over the Security Council on this historic occasion.

The significance of the United Nations is beyond any doubt. That is not what is being decided at this table. Nobody can seriously claim that humanity could do without the collective security system and international law and live under an increasingly unipolar, unjust and unsustainable world order and in the midst of a world economic crisis.

Paradoxically, some of the circumstances that led to a war, in which 50 million people died, including hundreds of thousands of young men from the United States, seem to be recurring today.

President Fidel Castro declared on 6 March:

> "Never before have all the nations of the world found themselves subjugated by the power and the whims of those who lead a super-Power with seemingly unrestrained power, while no one has the slightest idea of their philosophy, their political ideas and their notions of ethics. Their decisions are practically impossible to predict or to challenge. Their strength and capacity to destroy and kill seem to permeate every statement they make. This logically leads to fear and restlessness in many State leaders, especially in view of the immense military power that accompanies the political, economic and technological power of those who cannot stand to be disobeyed. The dream of a world ruled by certain norms and of an organization that would represent the will and the desires of all of the peoples is quickly evaporating."

"We the peoples of the United Nations", as the Charter states, are today an overwhelming majority of countries, powerful and weak, developed and underdeveloped, large and small, from all latitudes and from both hemispheres. We are a powerful coalition of States and nations, of political forces and ideologies, of cultures, ethnicities and religions and of Governments and civil society, which are growing in awareness and rebelling to defend the peace, preserve the United Nations and put a timely halt to this world dictatorship which threatens us all.

There has been an early mobilization against the war and its rejection by public opinion is unprecedented. All of those who feel profound solidarity with the American people admire their opposition to unilateral war, even though the real reasons, including casualty estimates and costs, are being concealed from them.

A unilateral war, the one we are promised, would have devastating consequences worldwide. It would be

the end of democracy in international relations. It would cause inestimable harm to the economies of developing countries, have terrible social consequences and would totally destabilize the Middle East.

The United Nations and the Security Council would be dealt a lethal blow that would annihilate their role and prerogatives as guarantors for international peace and security. It would put their existence in jeopardy and place all States, with no exception, at risk, facing the unpredictable vagaries of a universal tyranny and putting them at the mercy of new pre-emptive wars.

A war against Iraq would be unjust and totally unnecessary. These months of debate, meticulous inspections by the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which have been discrediting evidence and refuting accusations, the unquestionable cooperation of Iraq and the disarmament activities it has been carrying out in compliance with Security Council resolutions have proved that there is no credible threat or risk to the national security of the United States. We know this is not, from any point of view, an act of self-defence. Instead it is an act of predatory war.

It has now been announced, with astounding cruelty, that new weapons are to be used and that there will be an unprecedented intensity of bombing. It is declared that the magnitude of civilian losses is incalculable and the terrible humanitarian consequences are being disguised.

The path to the full implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council is based on the preservation of peace, cooperation and the good faith of all parties to dispel any doubts about the possession of weapons of mass destruction, the continuing work of UNMOVIC and IAEA and a comprehensive settlement on the question of Iraq, including the lifting of sanctions, to guarantee regional stability and full respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the political independence of Iraq, Kuwait and all the countries in the region.

The Non-Aligned Summit, held in Kuala Lumpur, loyal to its founding principles, has crafted a broad-ranging and relevant statement.

A unilateral attack against Iraq, as the Secretary-General has warned, would constitute a violation of the Charter. It would be an act of aggression.

The draft resolution being discussed is a declaration of war. Its objective is to deceive public opinion. Its contents and deadlines are impossible to implement. Even if it is dressed up with new benchmarks, or if the ultimatum is postponed for a few days, it remains essentially the same.

The opposition to war and the defence of the United Nations and the Charter by the majority of the members of the Security Council, including three of the permanent members, is commendable. Pressured by the empire, they enjoy the almost unanimous support of Member States, of international public opinion and of their own peoples.

Nothing could be more serious or have worse consequences than to surrender, and nothing could make the Security Council more irrelevant. The veto, so often used in an indiscriminate and illegitimate way, despite its obsolete and anti-democratic nature, would be, in this case, justified by the exceptional circumstances in which we are living. It would take limitless cynicism to criticize it.

The non-permanent members now have a special opportunity to make their own voices heard, as sovereign and equal nations that can rely on the enormous legitimacy of our votes. We have elected them precisely for moments like these. They know they are acting on our behalf and that we know the risks and challenges they face; they have our full support. The Non-Aligned caucus also counts on the solidarity of the whole Movement.

Whatever happens, if the Security Council fails to truly and legitimately fulfil its mandate, the General Assembly should exercise, in this emergency, all the authority and power granted by the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Iceland. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ingolfsson (Iceland): Let me at the outset refer to my statement in the Council some three weeks ago stating the general views of the Government of Iceland on the serious issue under consideration today.

My Government is deeply concerned about the situation prevailing in Iraq, and still hopes that the Security Council will manage to reunite in following up resolution 1441 (2002). No effort must be spared to maintain the resolve of the Council. A failure in this respect would have unforeseeable consequences for the crucial role the Council has in maintaining peace and security in the world.

Speaking in the General Assembly last September, my Foreign Minister underlined that full implementation of Security Council resolutions is imperative. He also commended the consensus that was emerging in the Council about how to deal with defiance of Security Council resolutions. A constructive approach from the Council is desperately needed again today.

It is the view of my Government that the Iraqi Government has not actively cooperated with the inspectors and is thus in violation of resolution 1441 (2002). The international community has tolerated the relentless obstruction of inspections for 12 years now. It is therefore high time for the United Nations to show determination; the credibility of the United Nations is at stake.

The Government of Iceland reiterates its hope for a peaceful solution. A war in Iraq is a last resort. It is up to the Iraqi Government to avoid conflict by disarming quickly and in a credible manner.

The international community must show its resolve and the United Nations its strength. The handling of this matter must leave no one in doubt about the authority and ability of our Organization to enforce its decisions.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Singapore. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): This is the first time that I have addressed the Council since our term ended. It gives me great personal pleasure to congratulate an old friend and colleague on the assumption of the presidency. As you know, Sir, you are presiding at a crucial moment in the Council's history; we have full confidence in you. I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Pleuger and his team for the tremendous job they did last month.

Today's meeting is both timely and critical. The Security Council is at a crucial decision-making point on Iraq. We all agree that the preference is for a peaceful resolution of the issue of Iraq. We also agree that war must always be a last resort. And of course all of us would like to see a second Security Council resolution adopted.

At the same time, we must not overlook certain fundamentals. The primary responsibility remains with the Government of Iraq, not the international community, to demonstrate compliance. It is imperative that Iraq disarm immediately and comply fully with all Security Council resolutions. During Singapore's term on the Security Council, we consistently took the position that the Iraqi authorities must comply with all Security Council resolutions. This position was based on the important point of principle that international law must be observed. On 8 November 2002 Singapore voted in favour of Security Council resolution 1441 (2002) in the expectation that international law and order would be preserved.

It is important to bear in mind that resolution 1441 (2002) was not the Council's first resolution on this issue. Iraq has had, unfortunately, a miserable record of complying with Security Council resolutions. In fact, resolution 1441 (2002) was the Council's seventeenth resolution on the issue since resolution 678 (1990) of 29 November 1990, which was designed to restore international peace and security in the area following Iraq's illegal invasion of Kuwait. Subsequently, the ceasefire terms adopted by the Council in resolution 687 (1991) of April 1991 required Iraq to end its weapons of mass destruction programmes, recognize Kuwait, account for missing Kuwaitis and third-party nationals, return Kuwaiti property and end support for international terrorism. Resolution 687 (1991) was designed as a comprehensive framework to restore peace and maintain the security of the region. Regrettably, Iraq has not complied with many of the terms of resolution 687 (1991), even though almost 12 years have passed.

When we negotiated resolution 1441 (2002), our understanding was that Iraq was in material breach of its obligations and that it would be the final opportunity for Iraq to comply or face serious consequences. Resolution 1441 (2002) was specifically designed to discourage Iraq from reverting to its past patterns of non-cooperation and evasion.

It has become increasingly clear that Iraq has only a few more days to comply with resolution 1441 (2002) or face the consequences. We therefore hope that it will comply immediately, actively, fully and unconditionally with the United Nations weapons inspectors. As Mr. Hans Blix said in his most recent statement to the Council on 7 March 2003,

> "It is obvious that, while the numerous initiatives, which are now taken by the Iraqi side with a view to resolving some longstanding open disarmament issues can be seen as active, or even proactive, these initiatives, three to four months into the new resolution, cannot be said to constitute immediate cooperation, nor do they necessarily cover all areas of relevance." (*S/PV.4714, p.5*)

Clearly, many unanswered questions remain to be addressed by the Iraqi authorities. *The Financial Times* today contains a report of an interview with Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei. He made a suggestion to a delegation of Arab foreign ministers travelling to Iraq that they urge dramatic action by Baghdad. We agree with Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei's comments that, "what is required is a dramatic change in spirit and sincerity". He added that

> "the Iraqi president [could] himself announce on television that he is prepared for complete cooperation and that he is giving directives to all Iraqi officials to cooperate completely and present all the documents they have, or even if they have weapons, to reveal them".

It is our hope that the Security Council will act in a way that will preserve the unity we achieved by resolution 1441 (2002). A unified position will send a clear message to Iraq from the Council that continued defiance of its obligations will not be tolerated.

It will also send the signal to the rest of the world that the development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction pose a grave threat to international order that cannot be ignored. Indeed, the issue under discussion today is only one example in a broader problem of weapons of mass destruction proliferation.

But even as we focus on these important questions, we must never lose sight of the human dimension of the Iraq issue. Singapore attaches great importance to improving the humanitarian situation of the people of Iraq. They have already suffered greatly as a result of the Government of Iraq's failure to comply with its disarmament obligations. Their suffering should not be prolonged. Once again, we urge the Government of Iraq to make the right decision.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Singapore for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Republic of Korea. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): In tackling the challenges posed by Iraq's programme of weapons of mass destruction, the Government of the Republic of Korea believes that all unanswered questions concerning Iraq's programme of such weapons must be fully resolved by Iraq's immediate and full compliance with all relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1441 (2002).

We note that, under strong pressure from the international community, Iraq has offered some degree of cooperation to the United Nations weapons inspectors since the resumption of the inspections in November 2002. However, the Government of the Republic of Korea remains gravely concerned that Iraq has not yet shown immediate, unconditional and active cooperation, as provided for in resolution 1441 (2002), and that many proscribed weapons and items still remain unaccounted for.

My Government is of the view that the findings of the inspection teams, including the most recent reports given last Friday by Executive Chairman Blix of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and Director General ElBaradei of the International Atomic Energy Agency, have indicated neither full and voluntary cooperation on the part of Iraq nor any full resolution of remaining disarmament issues.

Given Iraq's persistent failure to comply with successive resolutions of the Security Council during the past 12 years, the inspections cannot continue indefinitely. There should be a clear deadline for Iraq's disarmament. Without a genuine intention to disarm on the part of Iraq, the continued inspection process will not lead to a full resolution of the remaining questions with regard to Iraq's programme of weapons of mass destruction. The responsibility to disarm clearly

belongs to Iraq. Given the absence of Iraq's genuine will to disarm, it is essential that the Security Council send a unified and resolute message to Iraq. It is time for the Security Council, as the principal organ for the maintenance of international peace and security, to act on Iraq's failure to comply fully with its disarmament obligations.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to congratulate you most warmly, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. My delegation expresses the hope that under your competent guidance at this difficult time our current deliberations will yield positive results. My delegation would also like to thank Germany, which presided so tactfully over the Council's work last month.

My country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, has very closely followed the developments in the situation in Iraq. At their summit meeting, held on 24 and 25 February at Kuala Lumpur, the heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement welcomed the decision of the Government of Iraq to authorize the unconditional return of United Nations inspectors pursuant to the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. In that regard, they encouraged Iraq and the United Nations to intensify their efforts to find a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to all pending issues. They also emphasized that it was urgently important to find a peaceful solution to the question of Iraq in order to preserve the authority and credibility of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law, as well as to preserve peace and stability in the region and throughout the world.

The question of Iraq affects peace, security, cooperation and development in the crucial Middle East region. My delegation believes that we should do our utmost to ensure that this matter is resolved rapidly and, above all, peacefully. In today's world, where peace remains fragile, it is important that the international community come out resolutely in favour of settling disputes through peaceful means, however complex those disputes may be. The use of force to settle this conflict will cause material damage and great loss of human life and leave deep scars for a long time to come. In our opinion, we should do everything possible to avoid the outbreak of war, which can only cause greater suffering to the Iraqi people.

The work of United Nations inspectors began after Iraq unconditionally agreed to Security Council resolution 1441 (2002). Despite problems and difficulties, we have seen from the latest reports of Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei that there has been some progress and that some positive results have been achieved. Like the majority of Member States of the Organization, we think that the inspection work has begun to bear fruit, and we are of the view that a peaceful way to disarm Iraq can still be realized.

We have arrived at a crucial moment in history. The Security Council, the major body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, faces a historic choice. Peoples throughout the world are looking to us with great concern. In the light of the fragility of world peace and the uncertainty over our world's future that continues to hang over us, do we not think that the peaceful settlement of disputes must surely take first place in international relations?

Any solution to the problem through political means and within the framework of the United Nations prevents material damage, but also, and above all, saves innocent human lives. The Iraqi people, which has committed no crime, has already suffered too much and does not deserve to suffer even more. Like all the other peoples of this world, that long-suffering people is entitled to peace — a condition in which it can recover and prosper. The world will be doing a great service to the Iraqi people by opting for a peaceful settlement of the current crisis.

Those are some modest thoughts that my delegation wished to share with this gathering.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia): My delegation associates itself with the statement made earlier by Malaysia in its capacity as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, at whose request this meeting was convened.

The delegation of Indonesia is gratified that, once again, the Security Council is meeting in an open format to examine this contentious agenda item. It is a sign that, despite differences of opinion within the Council concerning the way forward, the doors to consultation and debate are still open. Indeed, negotiation is at the heart of the multilateral process, of which we continue to be a staunch supporter and advocate.

When my delegation addressed the Council three weeks ago, we were of the same opinion as those Member States that were convinced that, on this issue, the diplomatic option had not been exhausted towards meeting the objectives of resolution 1441 (2002). Although events have moved forward since then, we still firmly believe that the option is still on the table and that the Council can resolve this matter in a peaceful manner.

It is also important to be certain that we are seriously undertaking the responsibilities of peace in the spirit in which the Charter of the United Nations intends it, and not just as a series of steps leading to war. To that end, my delegation feels that the inspections being conducted by the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have yielded a good result and therefore that they should be given a fair chance, measured in terms of additional time as well as personnel and resources.

We do not think that anyone denies the fact that there has been some progress in the inspections process so far, or questions whether UNMOVIC and the IAEA are capable of the task before their inspectors. The general concern is that the inspections have not turned up evidence of violations of United Nations resolutions by Iraq. Unfortunately, that assessment can hardly be considered conclusive, since the inspectors are still working.

In that connection, Indonesia will support a strengthened inspection regime. We advocate a strengthened regime that is cognizant of the importance of its assignment and is able to execute that assignment responsibly, fairly and quickly. In that context, it is understood that, as of today, Iraq has provided its cooperation to enable the inspectors to work effectively. However, in view of the gravity and urgency of the situation, it is critically important that Iraq continue to actively and immediately cooperate with them, as mandated by resolution 1441 (2002).

We continue to believe that there can be no solution to the situation in the Middle East that ignores the reality of the entire region. I state this with particular reference to the situation in Palestine, which continues to deteriorate daily, although that may conveniently — but unwisely — be ignored. It is the belief of my delegation that the solution to the core issue of Palestine would, accordingly, contribute to the comprehensive settlement of all aspects of the problems in the Middle East and that we should never concentrate so much on other issues in the region that we overlook that fact.

Finally, we will call tirelessly on the Security Council to fully adhere to the provisions of the Charter — that is, to promote peace and security. In that context, therefore, Council members must bear in mind that peace is their obligation to the world. It is important to take into account that every member of the Council represents all Members of the United Nations. War must be a final entry in the dictionary of their deliberations: a decision to be made by the Council only as a last, inescapable recourse.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Albania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nesho (Albania): For quite a long time now, the Security Council has been fully committed to disarming Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. Resolution 1441 (2002), unanimously adopted, demonstrated not only the determination of the international community to fully disarm the Iraqi regime, but also its resolve to penalize a regime that possesses weapons of mass destruction and thus endangers peace and security in the region and even beyond.

In spite of the considerable efforts and the commendable work of the United Nations inspectors, we are of the opinion that they cannot achieve the required disarmament, because of the Baghdad regime's lack of willingness to cooperate by disarming immediately, actively and unconditionally.

The time for disarming Iraq is running out. The new draft resolution to be presented by the United States of America, Great Britain and Spain clearly and

firmly redefines the determination of the international community to preserve peace and security in the world. It ensures and maintains the authority of the international community and of the Security Council in their joint actions against such regimes, which present a threat to our common future and values.

Therefore, Albania supports the determined position of the United States of America and is in favour of this draft resolution. Albania has been part of the international coalition for disarming Iraq, and today we reaffirm our participation in the future coalition of the willing.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania, Mr. Ilir Meta, emphasized, in his most recent statement:

> "For many years now, this regime has continuously ignored the efforts of the international community, and of the Security Council in particular, for a diplomatic and peaceful solution, and has not collaborated in the elimination of the weapons of mass destruction. On this basis, we believe that intervention is inevitable in order to avoid the worst scenario of legitimizing a regime that would hold hostage regional and global security and that would challenge the authority of the Security Council as well as that of the United Nations, of which our country is a Member."

Peace and security cannot be achieved through endless meetings and unproductive discussions motivated by fear and uncertainty about the future, or by standing by and not taking action. Extending the process of the disarmament of Iraq will give its regime an opportunity once again to defy the international community and the United Nations, and, moreover, would seriously call into question the very credibility of this Organization. The United Nations should shoulder its responsibilities and act accordingly. Therefore, we must stand united and determined. In conclusion, allow me to reiterate before this body that peace is not the mere absence of war.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Viet Nam. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ngo Duc Thang (Viet Nam): At this crucial stage in the consideration of the Iraqi issue, I would like to reiterate our country's position that this crisis can be resolved through political and peaceful means, in conformity with the United Nations Charter, international law and the prevailing aspiration of peace-loving peoples all over the world. Such a solution calls for the utmost effort to be made in order to avert war and to maintain peace, security and stability in the world.

We believe that the option of finding political and diplomatic solutions to the question of Iraq has not been fully exhausted. Therefore, the cooperation of all concerned parties in the search for a peaceful settlement should be encouraged, and all diplomatic initiatives to this end should be given serious consideration.

Viet Nam welcomes the results of the work of the United Nations inspectors in Iraq. Last Friday's briefing, at which quarterly reports were presented by Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei, showed that very encouraging progress is being made in the inspection process in Iraq, and that Iraq has demonstrated more active cooperation. There has been real progress in the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Iraq has informed the inspectors about its Al Samoud missiles, and it has begun to destroy them within the prescribed time frame set by Mr. Blix.

This positive development shows that a peaceful settlement is possible and that there is a real alternative to war. Regarding Iraq's nuclear potential, Mr. ElBaradei has also confirmed that great progress has been made; and that, as accounts presented by Iraq are plausible and verifiable and cooperation with the inspections is good, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is confident about reaching final conclusions soon.

Iraq has also announced the presentation of a comprehensive report on outstanding issues in the field of biological and chemical weapons. Given the current situation and the ongoing progress, we share the view that there is no need for a second resolution and that the inspections should continue as long as they can yield viable results.

We also believe that the inspections cannot go on forever. With this in mind, the inspectors should be asked by the Council to present, for the Council's consideration, a list of criteria to determine Iraq's cooperation, or a list of specified and prioritized tasks that Iraq should accomplish within a reasonable time

frame. In this regard, we welcome all proposals to set benchmarks for Iraq's cooperation, and we call on the Security Council to give more serious consideration to the proposals presented by France, Russia and Germany in their memorandum to the Security Council of 24 February 2003.

The Government of Viet Nam continues to believe that there is still a chance for a peaceful solution to the Iraqi crisis and therefore strongly appeals to the Security Council and all parties involved to do all they can to avert war. By working together and acting together on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, we will strengthen the credibility and relevance of the United Nations and that of the Security Council in the fulfilment of its mandate of maintaining international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is Mr. Mokhtar Lamani, Permanent Observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Lamani (Organization of the Islamic Conference) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express my sincerest congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We are fully confident that the deliberations of the Council will be crowned with success under your wise leadership.

Let me also take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Ambassador Gunter Pleuger and to the German delegation for their successful and effective presidency of the Council last month.

Let me also thank you, Sir, for convening this open meeting. I should like also to thank the delegation of sisterly Malaysia and to the Non-Aligned Movement for their initiative to call for the convening of this meeting.

This meeting is being held as grave challenges face us from every side and as the clouds of war gather on the horizon, promising evil, grave and unforeseeable consequences and repercussions. The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has in the past repeatedly expressed its clear and forthright position on the threats facing Iraq. We have stressed that the resolution of the issue of disarmament of weapons of mass destruction must be achieved peacefully, as set forth by the Security Council. We believe that there is absolutely no justification for waging a military campaign against Iraq that would affect not only the region but the world. We have also called for the need to respect the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq.

The position opposed to war against Iraq enjoys overwhelming and unprecedented popular support, as highlighted by the many rallies and demonstrations held in hundreds of cities and towns throughout the world and as expressed in many resolutions adopted and recommendations made by governmental and inter-governmental organizations in many countries.

The heads of State and Government of members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference held an emergency summit in Doha, Qatar, on 5 March 2003. They issued a declaration expressing their outright rejection of an assault on Iraq and of any threat to the security and safety of any Islamic State. They stressed the need for a peaceful settlement to the Iraqi issue within the framework of the United Nations and in accordance with the relevant international resolutions. They reiterated their solidarity with the Iraqi people and called for the lifting, within international legitimacy, of the embargo imposed on that people. They rejected all attempts to change the region and to interfere in its internal affairs, as well as any disregard for its interests and just causes.

We believe that the use of military force against Iraq in the current circumstances, in which that country is cooperating with the demands of the Security Council and with the international inspectors — as indicated in the reports of Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei — would be rejected and unjustified, and represents an assault on the pan-Arab and Islamic world. It would be a serious attack on the central role of the United Nations, which is entrusted with maintaining international peace and security. It would be a grave threat to international relations, stability and security throughout the world. It would weaken the global campaign against terrorism and, indeed, encourage extremism and violence instead of eliminating them.

Faced with these grave circumstances, we cannot fail to urge Iraq to continue cooperating fully and positively with the international inspectors. We call on Iraq to facilitate the inspectors' mission and fully to implement relevant Security Council resolutions. We

continue to stress the need to respect the independence, sovereignty and security of all States, as well as the principles of good-neighbourliness. We emphasize the need for substantive and concrete progress on the issue of Kuwaiti detainees and prisoners of war, the State archives and other property of the State of Kuwait. We also call on Mr. Blix to respond to the request put forward by a number of Council members and non-Council members to list the remaining disarmament tasks in order to enhance efforts at implementing resolution 687 (1991).

It is sad indeed that the noise surrounding the possibility of war in Iraq is distracting from the aggressive and illegitimate practices of the extremist Israeli Government against the Palestinian people. The increasing pace of assassinations, the demolition of homes, acts of destruction and other forms of collective punishment continue unabated. The Security Council stands with its arms folded as it witnesses Israel's war crimes. It is unable to provide security and protection to the Palestinian people, which is languishing under a brutal and illegitimate occupation.

We wonder how long this double standard with respect to the norms governing international issues will continue, given the current international situation, in which Iraq is being threatened with destruction and annihilation and the killing of tens of thousands of innocent citizens, while the State of Israel is allowed to acquire all types and categories of weapons of mass destruction, openly and in large quantities. It is also allowed to perpetrate all forms of war crimes proscribed by international law and international norms and conventions against the Palestinian people — whose rights, freedoms and lands have been raped; whose economy has been destroyed; and which has been dispersed in refugee camps and exile.

We hope that the Security Council will, at this critical juncture, shoulder its historic responsibilities, address the difficult situation facing it and overcome its deficit of wisdom. Let it prove to the international community that it is worthy of the trust placed in it to maintain international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Lebanon. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Diab (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): We congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We thank you for convening this meeting. We also thank your predecessor from Germany and his delegation for all their efforts last month.

In the past few days, we have seen all the peoples of the world supporting the United Nations and defending the international system it represents. Unilateral use of force is a violation of the United Nations Charter, impairs its legitimacy and jeopardizes the present world system. Most of the statements made by States members of the Security Council at its last meeting on this topic, like those made today, reflect the positions of various geographic groups, including those adopted at the Arab Summit at Sharm el-Sheikh, the Islamic Summit at Doha, the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Kuala Lumpur and the French-African summit in Paris, along with the position of the Holy See. All these positions reject the war and express serious concern about its extremely dangerous potential impact on the political, social, security and the humanitarian situation, not only in the Middle East, but in the world as a whole.

In this context, the ministerial committee created at the fifteenth Arab Summit in Sharm el-Sheikh came to New York last week to convey the Arab position on the Iraqi crisis to the Security Council. It has four main points. It reaffirms the outcome of the summit held in Beirut in 2002, which can be summarized as follows.

First, it totally rejects any attack on Iraq and any threat to the integrity and security of any Arab State and national Arab security as a whole. Secondly, it reaffirms the need to respect international legitimacy and to implement resolution 1441 (2002), which does not authorize war against Iraq or provide an automatic trigger for military action. Thirdly, it calls for the inspection teams to be given sufficient time to fulfil their mandate and to finish their tasks and affirms that Iraq must cooperate. Fourthly, it reaffirms international obligation for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Iraq. The Security Council is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security and must play its role in dealing with the Iraqi crisis in all its aspects.

The reports of Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei note that continual and clear progress is being made in several areas, thanks to Iraqi cooperation with the

inspections. The reports submitted to the Council on Friday state that Iraq has actively and proactively cooperated. The proactive cooperation of Iraq includes the gradual destruction of its Al Samoud 2 missiles and other ballistic vectors and interviews with Iraqi scientists in accordance with the inspectors' conditions. It goes without saying that this level of cooperation is a qualitative leap forward in compliance with Security Council resolutions 1441 (2002), related to the verification of Iraq's disarmament of weapons of mass destruction.

Insistence on the military option has led the international community to discuss the possibility of whether or not to adopt another resolution. That has weakened the Council's unity and affected efforts to strengthen the role of the inspections of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Those efforts should have enabled the two agencies to ensure by peaceful means the elimination of weapons of mass destruction so that the sanctions that have caused so much suffering and tragedy to the Iraqi people could be lifted.

The draft resolution before the Council would authorize the automatic use of force. It sets an unrealistic deadline, contrary to the time line proposed by Mr. Blix himself. As a result, the main tasks that will be defined by the work programme, which is expected to be issued soon, would be subject to the deadline for war, thus preventing the implementation of the programme.

It is the clear the interest of the international community to strengthen the mandate of the inspectors so that they can eliminate weapons of mass destruction, not only in Iraq but in the Middle East as a whole, including in Israel, in keeping with paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991).

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Belarus. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ivanou (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Let me express our belief that under your able guidance, the Council will successfully deal with the difficult tasks before it.

The delegation of the Republic of Belarus reiterates its firm and unswerving commitment to the process of the peaceful disarmament of Iraq based on scrupulous compliance with the demands of the Security Council under the United Nations Charter and on unconditional compliance with all its relevant decisions. The President and the Government of the Republic of Belarus believe that the consistent efforts of the inspectors of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Iraq have yielded concrete, practical results that reaffirm the effectiveness and the correctness of the policy chosen by the Security Council in resolution 1441 (2002), that of the disarmament of Iraq by political and diplomatic means, in the interest of all members of the international community. Those results, as well as Iraq's gradually increasing cooperation with UNMOVIC and the IAEA, cannot be disregarded or groundlessly used to justify the choice of armed force.

We are resolutely against any kind of ultimatum imposing a limiting time frame on the activities of the inspectors or on the process for Iraq's compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. The Republic of Belarus advocates the further intensification of inspection activities in Iraq and calls upon the Government of Iraq to use all resources available to it to ensure maximum, active cooperation with UNMOVIC and the IAEA.

The continuing stirring of tensions around Iraq and unabashedly warlike intentions cause the President and Government of the Republic of Belarus deep concern. In solidarity with the majority of the members of the international community, Belarus sees no alternative to a peaceful disarmament process in Iraq and calls upon the members of the Security Council to show firmness and wisdom in order to maintain peace and to spare the Iraqi people and the entire region the ills of war.

The President (*spoke in French*): Of the 47 speakers on our list, 28 have spoken. Because of the lateness of the hour, I propose, with the agreement of the Council, that we suspend the meeting until 3 p.m. tomorrow.

The meeting was suspended at 7 p.m.